

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-07 DHA-02 EB-07 FAA-00 DOTE-00
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AEMBASSY LONDON 9177
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C O N F I D E N T I A L USBERLIN 1852

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, EAIR, CSCE, WB, GW, GE, US, UR, UK, FR
SUBJECT: GDR AS THE ANGEL OF MERCY: FRG-SCHOENEFELD RESCUE
FLIGHTS JULY 1 AND 6.

SUMMARY. RESCUE FLIGHTS ON JULY AND 6 CARRYING WEST
GERMAN PATIENTS BETWEEN THE FRG AND SCHOENEFELD AIRPORT IN
NON-ALLIED AIRCRAFT HIRED BY THE DEUTSCHE RETTUNGSFLUGWACHT (DRW)
WERE EXPLOITED BY GDR TO TRUMPET ITS HUMANITARIAN VIRTUES
IN NEUES DEUTSCHLAND ARTICLE JULY 7; BOTH WEST AND EAST GERMAN
PRESS NOTED THAT ALLIES AND FRG, BY CONTRAST, WERE UNABLE TO
ASSIST IN THESE CASES AND WROTE THAT FRG REPORTEDLY DELAYED
FOR A DAY PERMISSION FOR FRG-REGISTERED RESCUE PLANE TO FLY
ON JULY 6 WHILE GDR GRANTED PERMISSION WITHIN "THE SHORTEST
TIME PERIOD". BERLIN SPD BUNDESTAG REPRESENTATIVE WALDEMAR
SCHULZE WAS QUOTED IN SPANDAUER VOLKSBLATT AS POSING THE "MORE
AND MORE URGENT QUESTION "WHETHER FRG AND ALLIES WOULD IN
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THE FUTURE, AS IN THE PAST, TAKE NO COGNIZANCE OF RESCUE
FLIGHTS TO BERLIN, REGARDING THEM AS PRIVATE MATTERS, OR
WHETHER THEY WOULD "FINALLY THINK ABOUT HOW A MODUS FOR
RESCUE FLIGHTS CAN BE FOUND WHICH WOULD NOT IMPUGN ALLIED
SOVEREIGNTY IN THE CORRIDORS AND ALLOW RESCUE PLANES TO
LAND AT TEGEL." END SUMMARY.

1. JULY 1 RESCUE FLIGHT MANAGED TO INVOLVE NOT ONLY GDR, DRW, AND A SWISS-REGISTERED AIRCRAFT, BUT ALSO THE ROYAL AIR FORCE AND SOVIET ELEMENT IN BASC. INITIALLY, DRW WAS CONTACTED ABOUT A SEVERE BURN CASE IN GUETERSLOH, FRG, TO BE TRANSPORTED TO HOSPITAL IN WEST BERLIN. DRW ARRANGED FOR A SWISS-REGISTERED AIRCRAFT, WHICH FLEW TO BRITISH RAF BASE AT GUETERSLOH; SIMULTANEOUSLY, RAF WAS ASKED IF IT COULD PROVIDE AN AIRCRAFT TO FLY TO BERLIN; ALTHOUGH ORDINARILY IT HAS THREE SUITABLE AIRCRAFT, WE HAVE LEARNED, IT HAPPENED THAT THEY WERE ALL OUT ON MISSIONS AND WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE UNTIL THE FOLLOWING MORNING, WHICH THE DOCTORS FELT WAS TOO LATE. GDR PERMISSION FOR SWISS AIRCRAFT FLIGHT WAS GRANTED, ACCORDING TO PRESS, BY THE TIME THE SWISS AIRCRAFT HAD LANDED AT GUETERSLOH. ONCE IN THE AIR NEAR FULDA, FRG, SWISS CRAFT ASKED BASC VIA FRANKFURT AIR CONTROL CENTER FOR PERMISSION TO PROCEED BY DIRECT ROUTING TO SCHOENEFELD. FOLLOWING THIS PROPOSED ROUTE, THE AIRCRAFT WOULD HAVE PASSED THROUGH SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF SOUTH CORRIDOR. HENCE, SOVIET ELEMENT IN BASC WAS ASKED IF IT COULD PER AIR GERMANY PROCEDURES CLEAR DIRECT FLIGHT; FIVE MINUTES LATER, SOVIETS SAID THEY COULD NOT GUARANTEE SAFETY OF FLIGHT ON DIRECT ROUTE. SOVIET DECISION WAS RELAYED TO PLAND, WHICH PROCEEDED ON PREVIOUSLY-FILED NON-:9448\$94 :974 3 ;8- 04-&73, LOSING, WE ESTIMATE, ONLY A FEW MINUTES FLIGHT TIME. (SINCE SOVIET AUTHORITIES DISAPPROVED FLIGHT, QUESTION OF ALLIED CIVIL AIR ATTACHE APPROVAL IN BONN WAS OBTAINED.)

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2. JULY 6 RESCUE FLIGHT WAS PERFORMED BY AN FRG-REGISTERED AIRCRAFT, WHICH PICKED UP A WEST BERLINER INJURED IN A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT AND TOOK HIM TO DUESSELDORF VIA GDR AND CZECH AIRWAYS ON A ROUTING VIA PRAGUE.

3. COMMENT. ALTHOUGH IT IS UNLIKELY THAT A NON-ALLIED RESCUE FLIGHT TO SCHOENEFELD WILL ASK TO USE THE AIR CORRIDORS AGAIN, THE PROCEDURE FOLLOWED IN THIS CASE BY BASC STRIKES US AS THE CORRECT ONE. IF THE SOVIETS ARE WILLING TO GUARANTEE THE SAFETY OF SUCH A FLIGHT, THE ALLIES SHOULD BE EQUALLY FORTHCOMING. WHAT IS DISTURBING ABOUT THESE TWO AIR RESCUE FLIGHTS IS THAT THE ALLIES AND FRG HAVE COME ACROSS IN THE PRESS AS HESITANT AND INCAPABLE, IF NOT OBSTRUCTIONIST, WHILE THE GDR WAS ABLE TO PRESENT ITSELF AS AN ANGEL OF MERCY. BERLIN SENATE DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR AVIATION MATTERS (EMIG) SPECULATED JULY 7 THAT EAST GERMAN MOTIVATION FOR PUBLICIZING MERCY FLIGHTS USE OF SCHOENEFELD WAS DESIRE TO DRESS UP ITS IMAGE DURING BELGRADE CONFERENCE ON CSCE. GEORGE

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